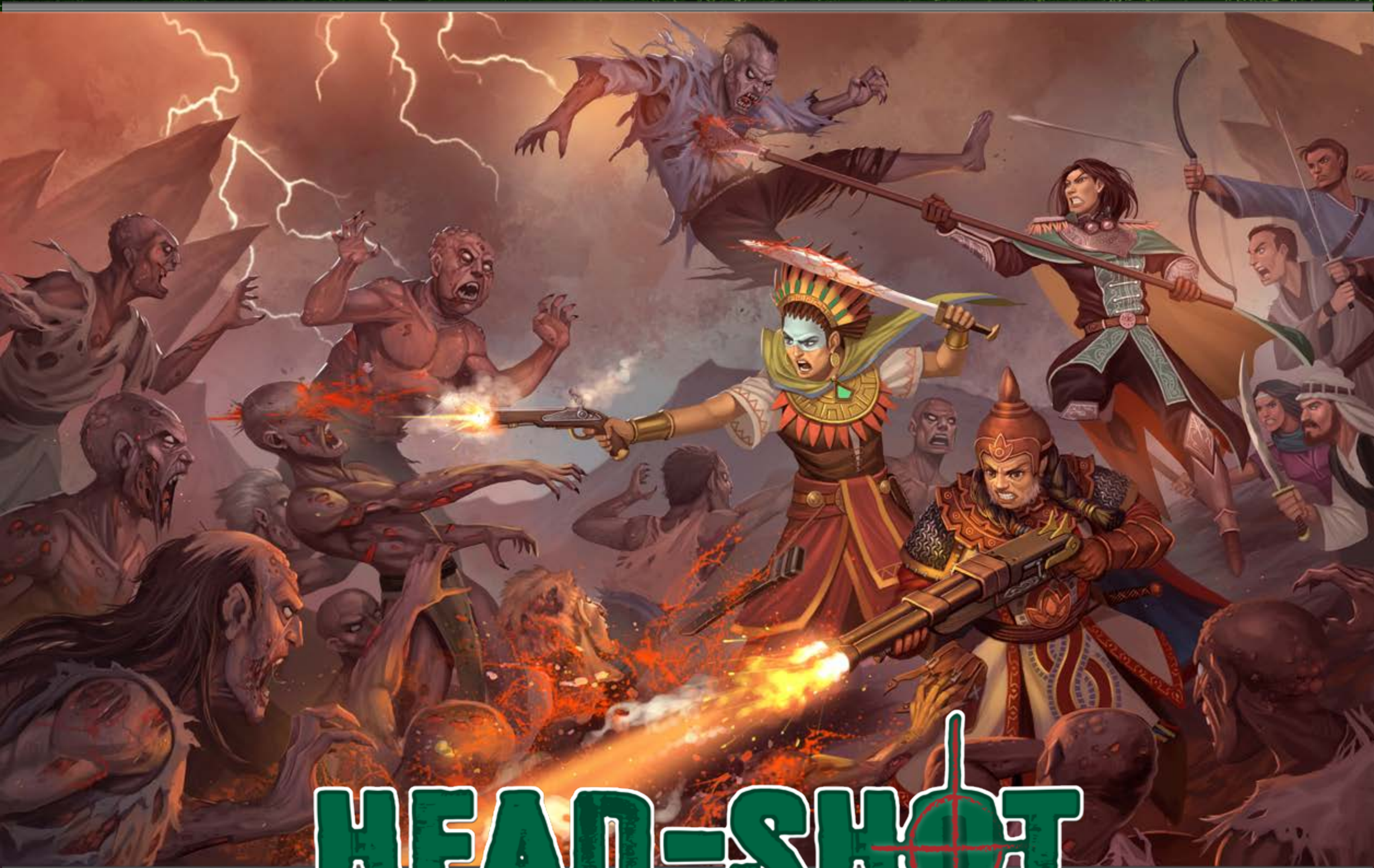
Second Edition

Pathfinder



Head-Shot the Rot

Adventure

Pathfinder One-Shot

DESIGNED FOR 3RD-LEVEL CHARACTERS

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HEAD-SHOT THE ROT

ADVENTURE

Pathfinder One-Shot

Pathfinder One-Shot: Head-Shot the Rot is a short Pathfinder Second Edition adventure, designed to be played in a single session lasting 3 or 4 hours. However, with opportunities for roleplaying and plenty of combat, the adventure could easily make for two exciting evenings of play. *Head-Shot the Rot* includes pregenerated characters that have backstories tied to one another (found in a separate downloadable PDF). This adventure should be played with all four characters. If only three players are available, the fourth character should be played as an NPC.

Sources: This adventure makes use of rules from the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* and *Pathfinder Guns & Gears*.

INTRODUCTION

In a dingy bar called the Powder Horn, located in the heart of one of the entertainment districts in the gritty city of Alkenstar, our unlikely heroes find themselves thrust together by the true chaos that is Fireday-night limited seating. Crowded even on a normal evening, the Powder Horn is bursting this particular night with patrons eager to watch the opening of a new play at the Aldivur Company Theater House. Dubbed *The First Sin of Pharasma*, the play has been heavily advertised for weeks, with fliers and posters plastered about the city.

Before getting into the action, give each player a chance to become familiar with their character and backstory. Each character's feats, skills, and equipment can be altered slightly without affecting play significantly, though this story is tailored to the presented characters and their firearms.

Each of the pregenerated characters included with this adventure has a connection with one other character, as described in their backstories. Booker Kaar and Doc Featherton are a pair of mercenaries who have learned to work together, and Zakzak the goblin and Zindarel the elven warrior have been traveling together for several weeks, forming a surprising friendship. At the beginning of the adventure, all of the characters have been seated together at the same table in the corner of the bar near the entrance, each taking advantage of the cheap food and drink while watching for potential opportunities to make some quick cash or land a job playing bodyguard for a noble whose sense of adventure outweighs their wisdom.

KILLING ZOMBIES

In so many zombie movies, a bullet to the head is the only way to stop the hungry dead. If you want to incorporate this theme in your game, then every time a weapon scores a critical hit on a zombie (but not a herexen) in this adventure, consider that a "headshot" that instantly kills the zombie—no need to roll damage at all. In addition, any blow from any weapon that kills a zombie should be described as a final blow to the zombie's head.



BACKGROUND

Situated deep within the Mana Wastes, the city of Alkenstar blends remarkable technology with a constant air of imminent danger. Haunted by deadly mutants and sitting between two competing wizard nations, the people of Alkenstar are protected by pistol-toting shieldmarshals and arquebus-wielding dwarven snipers. Many of Alkenstar's citizenry also carry their own personal firearms, whether that be a simple dwarven clan pistol or a more powerful gun, and rarely let their weapons stray far from their sides.

When the adventure begins, the time is 2 hours before sunset on a Fireday evening. For many people, this is the end of their workweek and the numerous restaurants, saloons, and gambling halls of Alkenstar's entertainment districts are doing brisk business. This evening brings a special event to Alkenstar, one which many people are eager to enjoy: a traveling theater troupe has rented out the renowned Aldivur Company Theater House to

perform a never-before-seen play by famous playwright **Melsa Aldthistle** (NE female human playwright). The play, advertised as *The First Sin of Pharasma*, promises the audience a "once-in-a-lifetime experience" that is "sure to go down in history!"

Unbeknownst to the people of Alkenstar, *The First Sin of Pharasma* is no simple play, but rather a deadly ritual devised to feed upon both the audience and the actors, transforming them into hungering undead. Melsa is a former cleric of Pharasma who has strayed far from her faith. She has come to believe that Pharasma's cycle of life and death is an unnecessary perversion. The River of Souls, Melsa decided, is merely an unnecessary deviation of the mortal journey, created by Pharasma as a way to siphon power and experiences from the mortal species. The souls sent to other planes and deities must therefore merely be a tax Pharasma pays her co-conspirators to go along with the plan. Stemming from this heretical theory, Melsa has transformed a magical ritual staged as a play in a defiant attempt to disrupt Pharasma's cycle—by creating an unending horde of perpetually self-propagating undead, with the theater-going citizens of Alkenstar acting as unwitting accomplices.


MARTELLE

Even as the heroes relax at the Powder Horn, the first (and only) performance of the play is already underway, transforming everyone currently within the theater house. The insidious nature of the ritual doesn't end there, however; each undead created by the ritual carries a fragment of it within themselves, and their slain victims arise moments after death as more undead monsters!

The map for this part of town shows only the lower floors of the two-story buildings, as no combat encounters occur on the upper floors. If the heroes have been in the area long enough, they might have a good idea of the neighborhood's layout.

A1. THE POWDER HORN — LOW 3

The anticipatory murmurs of excitement echoing off the walls of the Powder Horn are suddenly silenced by a blood-curdling scream. A man stumbles through the main door, clutching at a gushing neck wound. A gurgling gasp escapes his lips as he topples to the floor. Even as the man's body collapses, a shambling horde of misshapen humanoids attempts to follow him through, accompanied by a fetid stench of blood and excrement.

"What th—zombies?!" The cry comes from inside the bar as the patrons begin a panicked rush for the upper floor.

As they rush for the possible safety of the upper story, the burly bartender leaps over the countertop, a heavy length of wood in her hands. "The doors!" she cries out. "Clobber those blighters and shut the door or we're all doomed!"

Creatures: The patrons fleeing for the stairwell steer well clear of the zombies, giving the heroes plenty of room to fight without worrying about civilian casualties. **Martelle** (CG female half-elf bartender), the broad-shouldered bartender, holds a heavy locking bar and waits for an opportunity to drop it in place. The zombies, as an astute but panicked patron has correctly identified them, move toward the table closest to the door, eager to devour the people seated there: our heroes!

ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS (6) — CREATURE –1

NE | MEDIUM | MINDLESS | UNDEAD | ZOMBIE

Perception +0; darkvision

Skills Athletics +5

Str +3, **Dex** –2, **Con** +2, **Int** –5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –2

Slow A zombie is permanently slowed 1 and can't use reactions.

AC 12; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +2

HP 20, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** positive 5, slashing 5

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ fist +7, **Damage** 1d6+3 bludgeoning plus Grab

Jaws ◆ (attack) **Requirements** The zombie has a creature grabbed or restrained; **Effect** The zombie makes a jaws unarmed melee Strike against the grabbed or restrained creature with an attack modifier of +7 that deals 1d8+3 piercing damage.

A Brief Reprieve: If the heroes have exited through the door and out to the street, proceed immediately to area **A6.** Otherwise, as the final zombie falls, the bartender dashes forward to drop the locking bar into place, if the heroes haven't already sealed the door themselves. Heroes who follow the zombies outside without leaving someone to guard the door are likely to find themselves locked out.

As long as the heroes are still inside, the sounds of fighting from the street can be heard through the thick wooden walls, and the door rattles for a few moments as the sounds of groans and scratching fingers can be heard testing the building's defenses.

The bartender quickly addresses the heroes. "Name's Martelle. We oughta follow the rest up to the second floor and get a view of the street, see what in the Hell is going on out there." Martelle responds to any questions from the heroes by repeating her suggestion to head up to the second story while moving that way herself.

THE POWDER HORN—SECOND FLOOR

> A wide, open area provides additional seating for patrons of the bar. A waist-high railing surrounds a ten-foot-by-ten-foot opening to the bar below, and each of the room's walls sport a pair of large windows overlooking the street and alleys below.

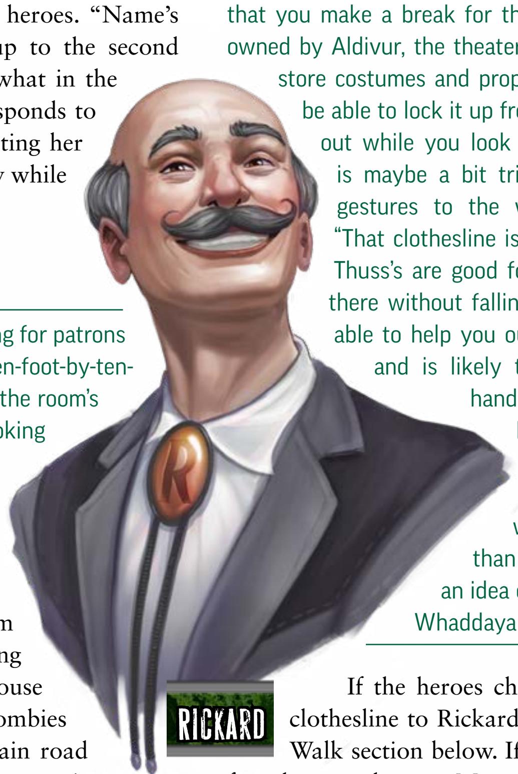
The second floor of the Powder Horn is packed with worried patrons, most of whom are crowded around the northern windows overlooking the street. From here, it's clear that zombies are shambling out of the Aldivur Company Theater House before spreading to the rest of the city. Zombies shamble about the town square and main road below. Across the street is a small market catering to the patrons of the district. Just west of the market is the home of the man who runs the playhouse, which also serves as a storage facility for the theater, and west of that lies the theater itself. On this side of the street, a 20-foot-wide alley separates the Powder Horn from an adjacent two-story building.

Martelle beckons the heroes over to talk once they've joined her and the rest of the patrons upstairs.

> "So here's the deal," she begins. "You all clearly have more fight and experience in you than most of the folks out this way, you're a bit more smartly armed, and who knows what to expect of the guard. We could wait things out, see what happens, but it's not exactly like the number of zombies out there is shrinking. If we don't put a stop to this now, the whole city could be overrun. So here's what I'm proposing–you lot head to the theater house and see if you can't figure out where all these zombies are coming from. Put a stop to them if you can or come back and let us know if you can't. You put an end to this mess and you've got free drinks for life here at the Powder Horn. I'm pretty sure any of the rest of us that survive can probably scrape together a purse for you if the city doesn't pay out a reward. Deal?"

Once the heroes have accepted the offer, Martelle offers a few suggestions on what they might do next.

> "Way I see it, you've got two paths forward. The first one is that you make a break for the house across the square. It's owned by Aldivur, the theater's operator, and is also used to store costumes and props from the theater. You should be able to lock it up from the inside, keep the zombies out while you look for anything useful. The other is maybe a bit trickier, but also safer." Martelle gestures to the window along the west wall. "That clothesline is bolted in pretty good, and the Thuss's are good folks. If you can shimmy across there without falling into the alley, they might be able to help you out some. Rickard is a gunsmith and is likely to have some extra ammo on hand, maybe even some weapons. If you fall off the line, you can still make a break for Aldivur's house, and if you get in there, well, they're closer to the theater than we are, so maybe they'll have an idea on what your best next move is. Whaddaya think?"



RICKARD

If the heroes choose to attempt to cross the clothesline to Rickard's Gunnery, see the Tightrope Walk section below. If they decide to make a break for the warehouse, Martelle accompanies them back downstairs, opening the door for their escape and then shutting and barring it behind them.

Tightrope Walk: The second floor of the Powder Horn is connected to the building to the west—a small gunsmithy with an upstairs apartment—by a permanent clothesline fixture. A thick length of hemp rope stretches 20 feet above the alley below in a loop between iron pulleys secured to the buildings' outer walls with thick metal bolts. The window of the opposite building, Rickard's Gunnery & Sales (area **A2**), is unshuttered and surrounded by a small garden box that looks sturdy enough to support a grown human. Heroes who succeed at a DC 19 Acrobatics check to Balance can walk across the clothesline to reach the far building. Alternatively, a hero can attempt a DC 17 Athletics check to Climb along the rope while hanging beneath it.

Heroes who fall from the line while using Acrobatics to cross or who critically fail their Athletics check to Climb can use a reaction to Grab an Edge and arrest their fall, preventing them from falling into the alley below. If any of the heroes fall into the alley, such as by failing the check to Grab an Edge, the sound of their landing attracts the attention of the zombies in area **A6**.

A2. RICKARD'S GUNNERY & SALES

> Sturdy granite blocks anchor each corner of this brick-and-mortar building. Like the other buildings along this stretch

of road, there are no windows on the ground floor. A stout stone chimney juts from the flat roof, providing ventilation for a large forge on the first floor and channeling heat through the upper apartment.

This building is the home and shop of the gunsmith **Rickard Thuss** (LG male human gunsmith). Fortunately for Rickard, he and his wife **Maggie** (NG female human gardener) had closed up the smithy early, intending to catch the second showing of *The First Sin of Pharasma* at the theater across the square.

Assisted Entry: When the first hero successfully crosses the clothesline from the upstairs of the Powder Horn, the window slides open and they're beckoned through by Rickard himself. He's a tall, balding man with an ample belly and a thick, curling moustache that hasn't yet succumbed to the encroaching gray already claiming the fringe of hair around his pate. Rickard stands by to quietly assist the heroes as they make their way across the clothesline, extending a large and calloused hand to steady them as they pass through the window. Once all the heroes have crossed the line, Rickard quickly shuts the window once more. In the event that one or more of the heroes falls from the clothesline into the alley below, Rickard drops a rope ladder down from the window and quickly beckons them upward. Any zombies attracted by the sound of a fallen hero attack the hero as long as they remain in reach, but the zombies lack the coordination to climb the rope ladder.

Once the heroes are gathered inside the house, Rickard addresses them. "You lot must be making your way to the theater to see what this nightmare is all about, eh?" Stomping down the stairs to his shop, Rickard can be heard hushing a large dog with a muttered "Quiet, Rosie," before rifling about and returning with an iron lockbox. Pulling a matching iron key from a leather cord around his neck, Rickard quickly opens the box, revealing that it has been stuffed to the brim with pre-packaged ammo. "Take what you need, then. I've got more to spare, and anything that gets through the front door will have to deal with my cannon first!" As the heroes restock their ammo supplies, Rickard and Maggie share some of what they've seen of the goings-on in the neighborhood. Below are some questions the heroes might ask, along with Rickard and Maggie's answers; note that if the heroes don't ask about the Scothwel Residence, Maggie offers that information voluntarily.

I'm sorry, did you say a cannon? Rickard replies, "Heheh! Indeed. Forged her myself during my enlistment with the shieldmarshals. Never know when you might need to knock down a door, a dragon, or a horde of hungry shamblers. 'Fraid it won't do you lot much good, though. I took the wheels off of it years ago and bolted it down after it nearly rolled over our dog Rosie during an earthquake. It'll still knock anyone who comes through those doors uninvited right outta their boots, though!"

Do you have any idea what's happening? Rickard replies, "No, but I think it started at the play premiere somehow. We had tickets to the next showing and were just changing out of our work clothes when the screaming started. We saw the first wave of those undead blighters come pouring out of the theater shortly after the first yell."

Any idea how to get into the theater without sending a whole horde down on us? Maggie replies, "Much as my husband might want a chance to show off his cannon, I'd prefer you didn't try to go out through our front door. It does take a bit to reload and there's an awful lot of those shamblers out there. Poor Rosie's teeth aren't what they used to be and I hate to think of her getting hurt protecting us. Now, mister and missus Scothwel planned to be at the first showing of the play; I'm afraid I might have seen Mr. Scothwel lumbering up the street chasing after some unfortunate people a few moments ago. That means there shouldn't be anyone in their home. If you can shimmy out the window and into their house like you did ours, it's a short hop across the street to the theater. If you're quick, quiet, and lucky, you could probably scoot in there without attracting the attention of the undead gathered in the square."

Scothwel Residence: Rickard's shop is next door to the Scothwel residence, a large house with a wooden second story. The heroes can Leap between the buildings to reach the Scothwel residence's upper window, but there's a catch: the window is shut and latched. Someone will need to cross the clothesline between the buildings (using the same DCs and potential consequences as the tightrope walk described in the upstairs of the Powder Horn). They then must attempt a DC 16 Thievery check to Pick a Lock and disengage the latch, then open the window so the rest of the party can pass through.

A3. SCOTHWEL CAFE

A simple two-story building stands at the end of the street. While its first story is brick and mortar like the other buildings in the area, its second floor is made of expensive imported oak, dulled by age but still sturdy and possessed of a dull polish that indicates the owner must have taken great pride in caring for the precious material.

This building has been the business and home of the Scothwel family for many generations, though it's now recently unoccupied. The last of the Scothwels were among the first victims of *The First Sin of Pharasma*, having just attended the opening performance. They closed down their cafe early in order to attend the play. Two sets of

large bay windows look out over the street on the second floor, along with another bay window along the eastern wall and smaller windows to the north and west.

Hidden Supplies: Characters who Search the Scothwel Cafe and succeed at a DC 20 Perception check to Seek discover a locked gun safe hidden in a cubby behind a false panel next to the Scothwels' bed on the second floor. The safe can be opened with a DC 17 Thievery check to Pick a Lock. Inside the box are 3 labeled *healing potions*, a pouch containing a dozen cut garnets worth a total of 18 gp, and Mr. Scothwel's prized possession, a *+1 piercing wind* (see below).

Scoot, Shoot, or Skulk: From the Scothwel residence, the heroes are about 20 feet away from the entrance of the Aldivur Company Theater House. The second-floor windows provide a view of the occasional zombie wandering forth from the theater.

If the heroes attempt to Sneak from the Scothwels' front door into the theater house across the way, they must each succeed at a DC 13 Stealth check to avoid the notice of the zombies in area **A6.** Heroes who attempt to simply dash across the street attract the zombies' notice automatically. If the heroes decided to thin the ranks of the zombies milling about on the main street by shooting from the street-side windows, they are able to do so without attracting the notice of the undead inside the theater. The night is filled with the sounds of screams and even fairly regular gunshots as citizens fight against the growing zombie horde and distant shieldmarshals, Alkenstar's elite security force, rally to the city's defense.

PIERCING WIND

The piercing wind is a combination weapon, a weapon that can be used as either a melee weapon or a firearm. When used as a firearm, the piercing wind is a one-handed weapon with a range of 60 feet that requires 1 action to reload, deals 1d6 piercing damage, and has the concussive and fatal aim d10 traits. When used as a melee weapon, the piercing wind is a one-handed sword that deals 1d4 slashing damage and has the critical fusion, finesse, forceful, and sweep traits. The combination, critical fusion, and fatal aim traits are reprinted below for your convenience.

Combination: Combination is a new trait for weapons that combine the functionality of melee weapons and firearms in unique or unusual ways. A combination weapon has a firearm form or usage and a melee weapon form or usage. Switching between the melee weapon usage and the firearm usage requires an Interact action. However, if your last action was a successful melee Strike against a foe using a combination weapon, you can make a firearm Strike with the combination weapon against that foe without fully switching to the firearm usage, firing the firearm just as you hit with the melee attack. In this case, the combination weapon returns to its melee usage after the firearm Strike.

Since a combination weapon is one weapon with two usages, both usages share any fundamental runes. You can put a property rune on a combination weapon as long as it's appropriate for either of the two usages, but if only one of the usages meets the property rune's requirements, the effects of the property rune only apply for that usage. For instance, a *vorpal* axe musket only applies the *vorpal* property rune when you are using it as an axe. Due to their complexity, combination weapons can't have another weapon, such as a bayonet or reinforced stock, attached to them.

Critical Fusion: Critical fusion is a new trait for combination weapons that grants you two additional options for their critical specialization effect when using the combination weapon's melee version to make a melee attack while the firearm's loaded. If you choose to use one of them, they replace the melee usage's normal critical specialization effect. First, you can discharge the firearm to create a loud bang and concussion, using the critical specialization effect for firearms instead of the melee weapon group's critical specialization effect. Second, you can choose to discharge the firearm to increase the critical hit's momentum or shoot the foe as you attack them in melee, dealing 2 additional damage per weapon damage die. Both options discharge the firearm, which typically means you have to reload it before firing it again.

Fatal Aim: It's possible to hold the stock of this weapon under one arm so you can fire it with a single hand as long as the other hand isn't holding a weapon, shield, or anything else you would need to move and position, to ensure the weapon doesn't slip out from under your arm. However, if you use both hands, the weapon can make fatal attacks. When you wield the weapon in two hands, it gains the fatal trait with the listed damage die. Holding the weapon underarm stably enough to fire is significantly more complicated than just releasing one hand from the weapon, so to switch between the two grips you must do so with an Interact action rather than Releasing or as part of reloading.

For more information on firearms, see *Pathfinder Guns & Gears*, available online at Paizo.com and in game stores around the world starting October 25th, 2021.

A4. ALDIVUR COMPANY THEATER HOUSE SEVERE 3

The fine furnishings of this theater, including velvet seat cushions, polished marble aisles, and expensive silk draperies, are marred by blood and other, fouler liquids. The elevated stage at the far end of the theater features a gloomy tableau of painted wood and canvas designed to resemble a decrepit cemetery. The display is decorated with religious iconography

that seems to twist and warp when looked upon for more than a moment.

The Aldivur Company Theater House, a long-standing landmark of Alkenstar named after one of the city's first and most famous theater troupes, is a splendorous affair, even marred as it is by the ravages of the undead. A pair of brass braziers with silver filigree are arranged at either side of the main entrance, providing comfortable lighting and warmth for the building.

Though the front doors currently stand open, they can be easily pulled shut and locked with a heavy oak-and-brass locking bar.

Braziers: The braziers heating and lighting the theater are fueled by a viscous alchemical oil designed to burn long and slow. A character can Interact with the braziers as an action to coat a single melee weapon in flaming oil. The weapon sheds light like a torch for 1 minute or until used to make a melee attack, whichever comes first. The first melee attack made with a weapon treated with the brazier oil in this way deals an additional 1d4 fire damage, after which the flame is doused. Once the flame has been doused, a character wishing to deal fire damage again in this manner must reapply the oil by returning to the brazier and using another Interact action to re-coat the weapon.

Creatures: The northern portion of this building is occupied by a stage. A grim backdrop painted to resemble a graveyard full of fractured headstones rises behind the stage; a pair of herexens, twisted undead carrying defiled religious symbols of Pharasma, caper in an obscene dance. The herexens, all that remain of the troupe leader Melsa Aldthistle and her husband Harven after performing the ritual, continue to act out the play scene by scene, over and over again, as their souls serve as fuel for the hungry magic.

Unless attacked directly, the herexens at first ignore anyone entering the theater, though their undead minions move to attack immediately. If they are attacked directly or if their plague zombie servitor is destroyed, the undead Aldthistles rush into combat, attacking the nearest hero. The Aldthistles work in tandem with each other, attempting to flank the same opponents and using their *harm* spells to heal each other. If they have several wounded zombies within 30 feet, they use a 3-action *harm* to spread some healing to the group, but they prefer to save their *harm* spells for 2-action castings on each other.

HEREXEN (2) — CREATURE 2

NE | MEDIUM | UNDEAD

Perception +8; darkvision
Languages Common, Necril
Skills Athletics +6, Deception +7, Religion +10, Stealth +6
Str +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3
Items dagger, defiled religious symbol of Pharasma

AC 17; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10
HP 30, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious
Final Blasphemy (divine, necromancy, negative) When the herexen is destroyed, it explodes in a wave of negative energy with the effects of a 3-action *harm* spell (DC 20). The herexen is destroyed, so it doesn't gain any Hit Points from this use of *harm*, and it doesn't need to have any *harm* spells remaining to use this ability.

Speed 25 feet
Melee ◆ dagger +10 (agile, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+4 piercing plus heretic's smite
Divine Prepared Spells DC 18; **1st** *harm* (×4)
Cleric Domain Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 20; **1st** *death's call* (*Core Rulebook* 391)
Heretic's Smite (divine, necromancy) While wielding the favored weapon of its former deity (such as a dagger for an ex-Pharasmin herexen), the herexen's Strikes deal an additional 1d6 evil damage against creatures that can cast divine spells.

PLAGUE ZOMBIE — CREATURE 1

NE | MEDIUM | MINDLESS | UNDEAD | ZOMBIE

Perception +3; darkvision
Skills Athletics +7
Str +4, **Dex** –2, **Con** +3, **Int** –5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –2
Slow A zombie is permanently slowed 1 and can't use reactions.

AC 13; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4
HP 50, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** positive 10, slashing 10

Speed 25 feet
Melee ◆ fist +9, **Damage** 1d8+4 bludgeoning plus Grab and zombie rot
Jaws ◆ (attack) As zombie shambler (page 9), but with an attack bonus of +9 that deals 1d12+4 piercing damage. A creature damaged by the jaws is exposed to zombie rot.
Zombie Rot (disease, necromancy) An infected creature can't heal damage it takes from zombie rot until it has been cured of the disease; **Saving Throw** DC 18 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 day); **Stage 2** 1d6 negative damage (1 day); **Stage 3** 1d6 negative damage (1 day); **Stage 4** 1d6 negative damage (1 day); **Stage 5** dead, rising as a plague zombie immediately

ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS (4) — CREATURE –1

NE | MEDIUM | MINDLESS | UNDEAD | ZOMBIE

Perception +0; darkvision
Skills Athletics +5
Str +3, **Dex** –2, **Con** +2, **Int** –5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –2
Slow A zombie is permanently slowed 1 and can't use reactions.

AC 12; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +2

HP 20, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** positive 5, slashing 5

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ fist +7, **Damage** 1d6+3 bludgeoning plus Grab

Jaws ◆ (attack) **Requirements** The zombie has a creature grabbed or restrained; **Effect** The zombie makes a jaws unarmed melee Strike against the grabbed or restrained creature with an attack modifier of +7 that deals 1d8+3 piercing damage.

The Curse Ends: With the Aldthistles destroyed, the power of their cursed play is also brought to an end. No more zombies rise from the dead and the infectious nature of the zombies that have already been created also ceases. This doesn't destroy any zombies that were already created, however, so if the heroes barred themselves inside the theater while being chased by the zombies from the main street in area **A6**, they'll still need to deal with that threat.

A5. THEATER DIRECTOR'S HOME

This small, two-story home has a back porch to the west; at the front of the house, a slight ramp leads to the front door to aid wheeling large sets and heavy props in and out. Inside the house, set displays lean against the walls and crates sit in neatly arranged piles in rooms repurposed for storage. Most of the crates are labeled in Common with brief descriptions of the contents printed in blocky letters, and describe such things as "clown masks," "harlequin attire," "fake blood," and "insulation."

This is the home of Galagin Aldivur, who uses it both as his residence and as a storage place for props and costumes for the Aldivur Company Theater House. The doors to the home are shut but not locked or barred. Inside, a long, wooden locking bar rests against the wall near the front doors that can be easily dropped into place to seal the entrance, while the door leading to the back porch has a simple turnkey lock that can be operated without a key from the inside.

Unless the heroes light the lanterns in the house or bring in their own light, there is no source of light within the home at the time of this adventure.

Walk this Way: Included among the many theater supplies and set pieces stored in this building are crates of makeup and other cosmetics. Clever heroes can attempt to Impersonate zombies by using the Deception skill to craft disguises for the party. The hero crafting the disguise gains a +1 circumstance bonus to the check as if they were using an elite disguise kit, thanks to the plentiful supplies stored here. As long as the heroes avoid attacking any of the undead or moving more than two Strides in a turn, these disguises let them move past the zombies in the main street without attracting attention.

A6. MAIN STREET — SEVERE 3

A wide cobblestone street stretches through the area, leading toward the city walls in the south and inward toward the more heavily populated sections of the city to the north. Four large, two-story buildings and a single-story warehouse form a quiet neighborhood situated around a circular plaza, with an area for temporary housing such as tents and lean-tos occupying a small park in the southeast.

Oil lamps—simpler affairs than the gas-powered lighting used in the higher-end portions of the city—line the streets at regular intervals, ensuring the road is well-lit even as twilight claims the alleys and eaves.

The road winding through this stretch of Alkenstar is called Aldivur Way, named after the theater house, though mostly only locals know this name due to the lack of street signs on this side of town. The street is well-lit thanks to the oil lamps lining it, though the light quickly fades to dimness in the alleys between the buildings. The road is made of well-maintained cobblestone, swept clean each day by Mrs. Scothwel, who views the neighborhood as her own fiefdom and takes dirt and disorder as a personal affront.

Creatures: Half a dozen zombie shamblers and a trio of plague zombies mill about the central square. Occasionally, a few of the zombies wander down the alleys or along the main street, disappearing into the city only to be replaced a few moments later by a fresh wave of zombies pouring forth from the Aldivur Company Theater House (area **A4**). These zombies will chase any living creatures they see and may batter down unlocked or unbarred doors, but they quickly forget what they were doing when thwarted by a locked or barred entry and return to stumbling throughout the city.

PLAGUE ZOMBIES (3) — CREATURE 1

NE | MEDIUM | MINDLESS | UNDEAD | ZOMBIE

Perception +3; darkvision

Skills Athletics +7

Str +4, **Dex** –2, **Con** +3, **Int** –5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –2

Slow A zombie is permanently slowed 1 and can't use reactions.

AC 13; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

HP 50, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** positive 10, slashing 10

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ fist +9, **Damage** 1d8+4 bludgeoning plus Grab and zombie rot

Jaws ◆ (attack) As zombie shambler, but with an attack

bonus of +9 that deals 1d12+4 piercing damage. A creature damaged by the jaws is exposed to zombie rot.

Zombie Rot (disease, necromancy) An infected creature can't heal damage it takes from zombie rot until it has been cured of the disease; **Saving Throw** DC 18 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 day); **Stage 2** 1d6 negative damage (1 day); **Stage 3** 1d6 negative damage (1 day); **Stage 4** 1d6 negative damage (1 day); **Stage 5** dead, rising as a plague zombie immediately

ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS (6) — CREATURE –1

NE | MEDIUM | MINDLESS | UNDEAD | ZOMBIE

Perception +0; darkvision

Skills Athletics +5

Str +3, **Dex** –2, **Con** +2, **Int** –5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –2

Slow A zombie is permanently slowed 1 and can't use reactions.

AC 12; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +2

HP 20, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** positive 5, slashing 5

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ fist +7, **Damage** 1d6+3 bludgeoning plus Grab

Jaws ◆ (attack) **Requirements** The zombie has a creature grabbed or restrained; **Effect** The zombie makes a jaws unarmed melee Strike against the grabbed or restrained creature with an attack modifier of +7 that deals 1d8+3 piercing damage.

Unending Hordes: Each time a zombie is slain, it is replaced 3 rounds later as a new zombie of the same type comes shambling out of the main entrance of the theater house. Until the source of the zombies inside the theater is dealt with, this area cannot be permanently cleared. Once Melsa and Harven Aldthistle have been destroyed, the zombies cease propagating and can be finished off once and for all.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the last of the zombies dealt with, a quiet hush begins to settle over the neighborhood. In the distance, the occasional gunshot and barking command can be heard shattering the still night air. Patrons from the Powder Horn begin making their way out onto the street to survey the damage. Rickard and Maggie Thuss emerge from the gunnery, Rickard holding a heavy pistol in one hand and the leash of an old brindle dog in the other, Maggie carrying a mop, bucket, and a determined air as she surveys the gore-stained neighborhood. As the bartender Martelle emerges from the Powder Horn and waves to the heroes, a sharp whistle pierces the night. A squad of shieldmarshals led by a woman with a closely shaved head and wearing a leather duster fall into formation along the road between the Scothwel residence and the theater house.

"Pardon me," the woman calls out in a voice that doesn't seem particularly concerned with whether she's pardoned or not. "I am Sergeant Kashenvale with the shieldmarshals of Alkenstar! Can anyone tell me what happened here?"

As the eyes of the night's survivors turn towards the ragged group of heroes who fought through the zombie legions, Sergeant Kashenvale follows their gaze. With a wry smile, she raises a hand in greeting.

"Seems like perhaps you're the ones who did our job while we were otherwise occupied? Come along then, you'll need to file a report if I'm to get you a commendation and some payment for your efforts." As she finishes the statement, Sergeant Kashenvale begins directing her soldiers about the square, dispatching some to take statements from witnesses and others to assist in cleaning up and locating the missing.

Sergeant Kashenvale takes the heroes' statements about the night's events, calmly noting everything they have to say. Once the heroes have finished their account, Kashenvale asks them to accompany her back to her station house (reassuring Doc Featherton that this isn't a trap and that she's willing to look the other way on any minor warrants for the time being). Once at the station house, Kashenvale provides each of the heroes with a formal commendation for their services on behalf of the people of Alkenstar. The commendation includes free room and board at any of the city's shieldmarshal barracks, exemption from punishment for any past (but not future) misdemeanors committed within the city limits, and a one-time bounty of 100 gold pieces for each of the heroes. With such a princely sum in hand, the heroes are free to pursue whatever interests they want within Alkenstar, or even charter an expedition into the Mana Wastes or beyond!



BOOKER KAAR



DOC FEATHERTON



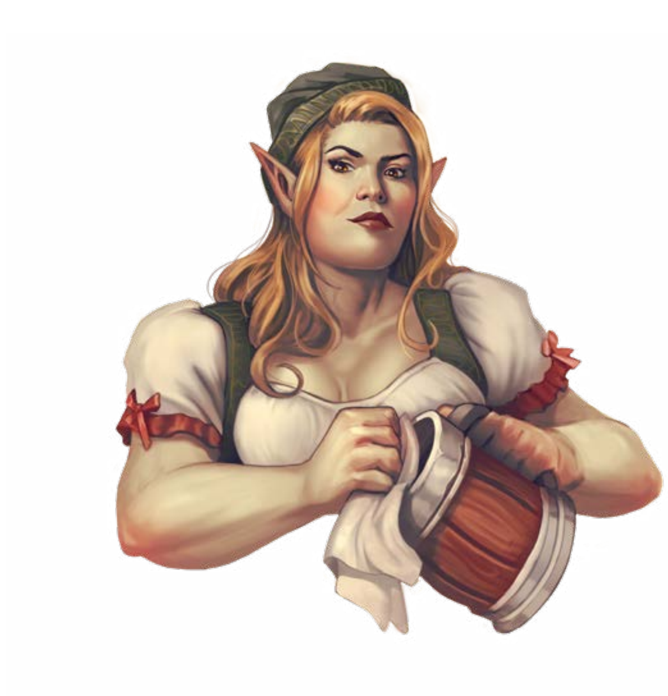
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ZINDAREL



MELSA



MARTELLE



RICKARD



COVER

ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



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